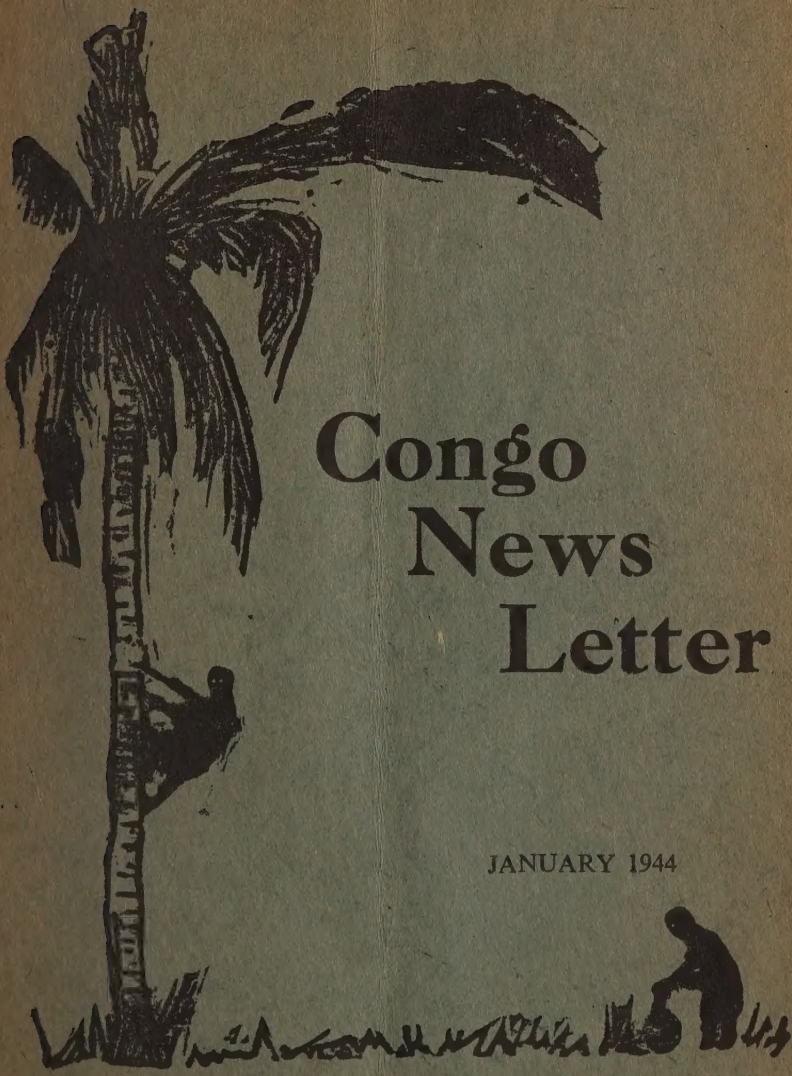


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Congo News Letter

JANUARY 1944

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TWO GOLDEN DAYS

There are two golden days in the week upon which, and about which, I never worry—two care-free days, kept sacredly free from fear and apprehension.

One of these days is yesterday. Yesterday, with its cares and frets and all its pains and aches, all its faults, its mistakes and blunders, has passed forever beyond the reach of my recall. I cannot undo an act that I wrought, I cannot unsay a word that I said. All that it holds of my life, of wrong, regret and sorrow, is in the hands of the mighty Love that can bring honey out of the rock, and sweet waters out of the bitterest desert—the love that can turn weeping into laughter that can give beauty for ashes, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness, joy of the morning for the woe of the night.

Save for the beautiful memories, sweet and tender, that linger like the perfume of roses in the heart of the day that is gone, I have nothing to do with yesterday. It was mine; it is God's.

And the other day that I do not worry about is to-morrow. To-morrow with all its possible adversities, its burdens, its perils, its large promise, and poor performance, its failures and mistakes, is as far beyond the reach of my mastery as its dead sister, yesterday. It is a day of God's. Its sun will rise in roseate splendour, or behind a mask of weeping clouds. But it will rise. Until then, the same love and patience that held yesterday, holds to-morrow. Save for the star of hope that gleams forever on the brow of to-morrow, shining with tender promise into the heart of to-day, I have no possession of that unborn day of grace. All else is in the safe keeping of the infinite love that holds for me the treasures of yesterday. The Love that is higher than the stars, wider than the skies, deeper than the seas. To-morrow is God's day, it will be mine.

There is left for myself, then, but one day in the week:—

to-day. Any man can fight the battles of to-day. Any woman can carry the burdens of just one day, any man can resist the temptation of to-day. It is only when, to the burdens and cares of to-day, carefully measured out by the infinite Wisdom and Might that give with them the promise—"As thy days, so shall thy strength be", we wilfully add the burdens of those awful eternities—yesterday and to-morrow, such burdens as only the mighty God can sustain—that we break down. It is not the experience of to-day that drives men mad. It is the remorse for something that happened yesterday and dread of what to-morrow may disclose.

Those are God's days. Leave them with Him. Therefore I think, and I do, and I journey but one day at a time. That is the easy way. That is man's day. Dutifully I run my course, and work my appointed task on that day of ours, God the Almighty and All-loving takes care of yesterday and to-morrow.

REV. ROBERT J. BURDETTE. (1844-1914)

MY RETURN TO CONGO

May 29th was a day of fulfillment as I went on board the S.S. Joao Belo to begin the voyage back to Africa. Outwardly it might only seem like the setting out on a voyage, but to start is to arrive when one is in God's good keeping. These days the preparation for a voyage constitute the major effort, while the taking up of one's duties on arrival but the welding of a broken chain.

The major effort began a whole year before the final arrival at my destination. I wished to return in August 1942, but there was no way and no boat to carry passengers. After fifteen months away from the field I felt entirely ready and wholly willing to return. But besides a willing heart one needs passport, visas and numerous permits, licenses and certificates to allow one to carry needed baggage and these are not so easy to obtain. In November word was received that I might be able to sail early in the New Year, and with high hopes I began preparations, expecting to leave in February. But month followed month until the last part of May, when all was in order and I could set sail.

I had wondered if I would be the only missionary on the boat, but on going aboard I found a party of ten others,

three of whom were new recruits going out for the first time. We had grand, good times together and sweet fellowship all those weeks and it was not without regret that we had to part.

My sincere thanks go to the many friends at home whose prayers have followed me and who have had such a large share in bringing me safely to my destination. During the days at sea, our favorite chorus was:

Wide, wide as the ocean,

High as the heavens above,

Deep, deep as the deepest sea

Is my Saviour's love.

I though so unworthy, still I'm a child of His care.

For His word teaches me that His love reaches me Everywhere.

And surely there is no better picture, of the breadth and the length and the height and the depth of His all encompassing LOVE, than the vastness of the ocean and the heavens above. Wave after wave, rolling tossing, rolling, tossing in never ending succession, with the heavens sometimes bright and sometimes cloudy, but always there. Those heavens not only over me, but a protecting canopy stretching out over loved ones on land. To have the assurance that one is surrounded by that love, not only on all sides, but that it is below in those waters and above in those heavens, safe-guarding not only in time of tempest, but from the lurking dangers of subs and planes, is a knowledge bringing peace that nothing can disturb. As we met daily for prayer His presence was very real.

After a voyage of fifteen days we reached Lisbon. We hoped to get a boat in a few days, certainly not longer than a week. But the days and the weeks went by from June 14th until July 12th when we set sail in a vessel bound for Mosambique, stopping at several island ports, as well as in Angola, West Central Africa. We did not know anyone in Lisbon and were inclined to be impatient over the delay, but friends of the Evangelical churches were soon found, and before we realized it, the weeks had passed and we were sad to leave those whom we had come to know and love because of our common love for our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. Not knowing Portuguese we were

constantly calling upon someone to help. Two of these friends who spoke French and English were untiring in their helpfulness and in showing us places of interest. Our first excursion was to Cintra, about two hours by train from Lisbon. There on top of the mountain was an old Moorish castle which we explored from top to bottom. We also visited former kings' palaces, art museums, old churches, botanical gardens and the Bethlehem Tower, built over the place where Vasco de Gama is said to have spent the night in prayer before beginning his long voyage to the East Indies.

In Lisbon there were at least two English speaking churches, but some of us felt that we should join in worship with the people in whose land we were guests. And truly we entered into the spirit and felt at home in those earnest, deeply spiritual groups, even though few words were understood. Most of the pastors spoke English and would translate or give the gist of the message. Most of the melodies of the hymns were familiar, and it gave us a deep sense of the oneness of all believers, to join in the worship and praise with these fellow-Christians.

The voyage from Lisbon to Africa was uneventful as far as outward circumstances go, but eventful in His care for every detail. We were to land in Angola and find our way to Belgian Congo as best we could. But not so in His plans. A small boat was sent down from Matadi for the many Belgians on board, and we too were given a place. We transshipped right out in the Congo River between Angola and Belgian Congo. We arrived at Boma the same night and were welcomed and lodged by missionary friends of the Christian Missionary Alliance Mission. They gave up their own beds for us and slept on mattresses on the floor as did some of the men of our party. The next day, Aug 1st., we went through the rapids to Matadi and there the Swedish missionaries gave us a warm welcome and helped us in innumerable ways. Aug. 2nd. found us early at the train and we reached Leopoldville that evening. There I was among my own missionaries and what a time of rejoicing and thanksgiving we had.

His marvelous care followed us. Missionaries going to Nigeria found planes going in a few days and were off on the last lap of a long journey. I enquired about a boat going

up the Kwilu river, only to find I would have to wait almost three weeks from the time of my arrival. Then I enquired about a plane. It so happened that this was the week when the small plane which makes a round trip from Leopoldville to Luluabourg, and back again, was going, and there was room for me to go as far as Kikwit. What a thrill to ride up above the clouds; for a time nothing but the clouds and the blue heavens were visible, and we soared through a true, pure world above all the sordid, hindering things that clutter our paths below. Then we came out of the clouds and the earth appeared fair with its mountains and rivers and green, forested valleys. This trip of two hours would have taken ten days by boat, and that too was thrilling. On arriving at Kikwit I was helped and cared for by missionary friends, and soon learned to my joy that a boat would be going down river in a day and a half. On this I engaged passage and reached Vanga Aug. 12th. after a day's journey. I was up at five A.M. on the morning that we arrived and felt that I would not have time to eat breakfast, but it was past eight before we docked. As the boat neared Vanga I saw a few natives coming down to watch the boat. I stood on deck waving, hoping someone would recognize me, but it was not till the boat was stopping and I could shout a greeting above the noise of the engine, that one of my old infirmiers heard and called, "Why it's Mama Alice". The word went up hill quickly and the Robbins and Freases and Ruth Dickey came down the hill as if on wheels. The Robbins were going out in the district that day and Ruth the next day. The Robbins had been hindered or they would have been gone and I might not have seen them. "Could I go with them?" I could and did, spending a happy week with the teachers and pastors at the Institute, helping to teach and from time to time giving them something of my experiences along the way. Then back to Vanga to help care for a Canadian missionary who was very ill.

Then one day Tata Brown from Moanza arrived and Sept. 6th we were driving around the hills, crossing ferries and climbing mountains till Moanza lay before us, a small but lovely spot, with the majestic hills around it and the valleys stretching away to the "outside world". Then I had reached home and was welcomed into the Moanza family by school-children, teachers, hospital staff, and last but not least

by the Browns.

ALICE JORGENSEN

JOHN LUKOKI

John Lukoki came to Banza Manteke more than 55 years ago as the 'boy' for Mr. Ingham. He had worked for him at Lukunga for some time while he was a State Agent. There he saw Stanley on one of his voyages. After Mr. Ingham's death Lukoki did not return to his country but stayed on at Banza Manteke and married there. He worked at one thing and another during those long years, most of the time in the employ of the Mission as boy, transfer agent in the caravan days, carpenter, foreman, etc.

I shall never forget the first time I remember seeing Tata Lukoki. I was new at Banza Manteke, had been there less than two months and I could only talk to a few of the natives who knew a little French. We were ready to leave on a three week's trip to Lukunga with the Geils when a little girl, a very bad accident case, was brought to the Station. The only chance of saving her life was that I stay and take care of her. I stayed, the only white person for miles around. That first day as I came from the hospital past the carpenter shop, Lukoki stuck his smiling face out the window and said: "Don't be afraid we are with you". (He was the only one who could speak English) "We are with you", that was a good start for a new missionary and the cooperation and fellowship that started during those hard days has grown through the years until we feel at one with the people. You could always count on Tata Lukoki being with you at all times with his happy, helpful disposition.

He was ill here in the hospital and when he thought he was going to die he sent for me and said: "I am going to be with Jesus and I want you to see that I have a decent burial." He suffered quite a long time after that and I saw him daily but his one desire was to be with Jesus. "We shall see each other again there" he said, and indeed we shall. What a joy it will be to have fellowship with all our friends and loved ones, with the limitations of this life done away with.

Perhaps Tata Lukoki is best known to most folks as the father of Samuel Lutete, the very efficient and helpful manager of the Union Mission Hostel where he receives hun-

dreds of missionaries, feeds them and helps them in a hundred and one ways in getting them to and from their fields. To have been the father of Lutete was quite an honor.

MARY BONAR.

"AMONG THE VANGA WOMEN"

That our women's work at Vanga is not more progressive is not the fault of the women, but that the field is so large and our staff so limited that we cannot begin to meet the challenge. Some of our women are backward and slow to respond, but there are sections of our field where the women are overwhelmingly eager and responsive, but are in great need of leadership. Some of the pastors' wives, many Kimpese-trained, are splendid women with qualities of leadership, but they need guidance.

Last year was the second time we had arranged for meetings on the Day of Prayer to be held at our fifteen outposts. The program we sent to them was built upon the universal theme "that they may be one", but it was greatly simplified and adapted to the understanding and abilities of the leaders and those who would attend. Each pastor's wife was urged to gather the women from the villages for the day. To avoid large curious crowds we insisted that Christians only should be called to come. In the program we stressed prayer for specific purposes and the reconciliation of any who had hard feelings one against the other.

Not every post had a gathering and some, who did, failed to send in a report; but those who did reported a total of 1349 in attendance and they all expressed much appreciation of the service. A great number walked many miles carrying babies to attend. I will quote from the letter of Mama Pauline Mununi of Mobini,

"There were 170 church members who came and 58 inquirers so we divided into two groups. We followed the program very well. (Here she goes into detail as to those taking part.) Oh Mama, we were happy and rejoiced with much thanksgiving! There would have been many more in attendance but because it rained very hard that day, others came the next day to worship, in number 198. Many who had quarrels and enmity became reconciled and finished it, also."

When, in January, we made a hesitating suggestion of a

Women's Conference to our pastors' group, they were enthusiastic and would not refrain from bringing up the subject until the day had been set. We had long thought of one, but many problems presented themselves. If we made it a general conference open to all, there would be a huge, unwieldy crowd of five separate languages, many not understanding one another, and nothing constructive could be done. The numbers would be far greater than we could find accommodations for here at Vanga. Finally it was agreed that, from each of our fifteen posts, there would be three representative women, the pastor's wife, the wife of a teacher evangelist and one village Christian woman. They in turn would carry back to their women the message of the Conference. Others would not be excluded from the meetings, but no provision would be made for them.

The next problem was the date. It must be during school vacation so that we might have the use of the girls' dormitory. It must be between the times when the women harvested their last year's crop of peanuts, but before the planting of the new gardens. July was the month agreed upon. Each woman was to bring her own food, so a three day conference was planned, for a three day supply is about all a woman could conveniently bring.

Our Vanga people are spontaneous, and their reactions are usually very determined. If they like a thing they like it very much, but if it doesn't appeal to them they do not hesitate to show it in very emphatic terms. As with children, we never can predict what the reaction may be. Sometimes a well-planned idea falls flat before their frankness. So it was with trepidation and much earnest prayer that we approached the time and prepared the program.

Two women made a mistake in the date and came early, one by a whole week, but they were not to be daunted. Having come a long distance they decided to make their food last and wait.

We had almost a full representation, which is remarkable considering the days of travel involved and the large families, the older children to be left behind, the smaller ones to be carried with them. The majority of the representatives were former school girls, some of twenty years ago. When they entered the girls' compound they seemed to enter once more

into the spirit of school days. Friendships were renewed, old times recalled, and there was much laughter and kindly bantering. Muhululu, who fifteen years ago was the leader in merry-making, seemed little changed by fifteen years of married life and a large family. She was once again the life of the party.

We had planned our program with reservations for possible changes. In the first place, what Congo woman in her natural setting works according to the clock? A half hour more or less means nothing. We had foreseen this and determined not to fret about it nor let it spoil the spirit of our three short days together. The first bell for gathering rang; no one appeared. A second was rung; no one. We sent a messenger and a few finally came strolling along. We begin a song and before we are through all are there, but a precious half-hour has been lost. (Mental note of readjustment in program and to ring the bell earlier tomorrow.) A bit of paper with her name pinned to her dress (or loin cloth if she did not own a dress) with a precious safety pin added immensely to the prestige of the delegates. (Yes, they might keep the safety pins when it was all over.)

The first question to come on the floor was what language we should use during the conference. There we were Bahunganas, Basongos, Bambalas, Bayanzis, Bamptonus and Bakongos! The language question is sometimes the match that sets off the firework. After a short discussion it was agreed that we should all speak Kihungana and that no one would smile at another's mistakes. I am sure it was the missionary who made the most. That was a real score and a good beginning, for our women are conservative and often persistent (stubborn, if you will).

Our program centered around the theme the "New Woman in Christ Jesus", and Bible study and devotional talks each day dealt with that subject, as well as the discussions of practical daily Christian living. Reports of women and girls' work were heard from each part of the field. Questions were asked and notes compared. Mrs. Freas took an hour daily with them on Prayer and the Christian Home, and gave a call to consecration of the home to Christ, to which there was a very gratifying response.

Christian marriage and married life took the largest part of the discussion time. Native customs are very complicated

and involved and some of them present tremendous problems to the Christian family. The father and mother do not have the first claim to the child, but the mother's family. Because of this Christian girls are often married to heathen, polygamous husbands. Certain taboos and rulings of the old life are inconsistent with monogamous marriage and contrary to the word of God. These were discussed in the light of Bible teaching. Such problems as these must be worked out by our Christian leaders themselves, but we can show God's teaching and Christ's ideal. They, too, are guided by the Spirit and are desirous to be Christian in all ways. We are foreigners and can hardly understand the intricacy and reason for many of their customs and can much less dictate the way in which necessary changes should be made. The men have already done much thinking along these lines and requested that we discuss them with the women.

We talked of work among women and girls, and Miss Dickey discussed with them the conditions she saw among the young girls in her camps during the dry season. The time was too short to finish half of what we wished we might, but we did make a real beginning. The contribution of the women was largely in presenting problems. We hope that another time their thinking will have developed into constructive suggestions. There was no lack of interest and an earnest desire to know what the Bible said. In order to keep them from spending too much time taking notes on Bible references, we promised them a list to take away with them.

A former tendency among our people has been to consider a conference the time to bring up grievances and have a rousing argument which often spoils the fellowship of the group. On the whole they have outgrown this childish idea, but among us there were two or three women who felt they must "start something." Our hearts almost stood still as we wondered if our unity in the Spirit was to be broken and our growing intimacy ruptured. We knew from former experiences that the only thing to do is to stop right there and wait in prayer for the Lord to over-rule. Several tense moments were in this way bridged, and the fact that we finished in real and mutual fellowship was another triumph for the Lord. And the women involved seem to be better friends to us than they have ever been.

Perhaps the real highlights of the conference were the messages given by several of the women themselves, and we felt our own contributions fade into insignificance.

To give relaxation from the heavy program, to which the women are unaccustomed, we had arranged for one of our helpers to show the women how to bake beans in palm oil, how to make a rich syrup from bananas alone, and how to make a strong liquid soap from ashes and palm oil.

There is hardly a gathering that does not furnish some bit of kindly humor for us white folks. So did this one. The last afternoon we had planned a tea party, the refreshments to be furnished by the missionaries but to be served by the station women at the pastor's home.

Just before we dispersed for the tea, the very practical question arose, "When we go back to our villages and are asked what we brought back from the Conference, what shall we say?" It was a practical question which needed a very practical answer. So we replied, "If you will go up to the tea and begin without us, we will hurry home and type a stencil of the minutes and findings of the meetings so that it can be mimeographed immediately and you will have them to take home with you. They loved the idea and agreed to proceed with the festivities. We supposed they were quite happily enjoying themselves and didn't rush getting back. What was our consternation, when we did arrive, to find that they were still all sitting around waiting for us, babies crying, mothers restless. Not even the fruit juice had been touched, except by the flies. By that time it was very nearly the hour of the evening service, so refreshments had to served rapidly, rather than gracefully. For some reason yet unknown to us, the hostess insisted that the drink must be served first and all finished before they should have even a glimpse of the native corn-bread sandwiches. It was embarrassing for us (but she didn't mind), for the women evidenced keen disappointment when they were served several times with fruit juice without anything more substantial. But finally we were permitted to serve the more satisfying part of the menu and bits of it were tied up in the paper napkins to share with whoever was left behind. It would be very ungracious to eat it all, and not take some home.

When it was all over and we were too tired to think

or act, we still wanted to be sure that everyone was happy, so we told the women that we would be at home that evening. They were welcome to come to the house. There would be no teaching and no program but we could just visit, if they wished. We did not make the invitation very attractive nor pressing, and didn't suppose they would come. But they did, every one of them, and we talked about the every day things which women out here like to discuss; our mothers and how many children they bore and how many grew to adulthood, our own children, our own ages and the probable ages of the women there. We recalled incidents of the days when they had been school girls and laughed over their misdeeds and subsequent punishments. They were so pleased when I remembered. They listened to the phonograph and scrutinized pictures of members of our family in America. Tired as we were, we felt that it was one of the best parts of the whole conference, for it drew us very close together. As we parted in prayer we felt that we knew our sisters-in-Christ better, and they us, than we had ever done before. We know we love them more, and we hope that they can say the same for us.

HELEN R. ROBBINS.

FREDRICKSON'S DIARIES

In 1902 the gospel was first brought to the Bamfunuka and the Diki-Diki. Fred writes: "We had long desired to bring the gospel to Lula Lumene, a cannibal tribe east of Kifwa. Lula is the name of a village and Lumene is the name of a river running north that empties into the Congo river about fifty miles above Stanley Pool. It was difficult to obtain enough carriers owing to the fact that we were to cross a plateau about thirty miles wide, of which the first twenty miles had no water nor villages. The carriers did not like to face that difficulty; besides, they heard rumors of scarcity of food. At last they agreed to take us to the Nsele River, and I trusted to have other men there to take their loads. November 13th, I said good-bye to my wife at Kifwa. A group of teachers, my carriers, Steven Bangu and I started off for Lula Lumene. At Boka, one carrier left his load and dared not go on, but we secured another man in his place. Passing through villages we always gave a gospel message, several songs and a prayer, and met old and new friends. Some chiefs were

friendly, courteous and helpful; always bringing some food as a friendly token to strangers; others were not so friendly. We stopped at the following villages: Boke, Kinzazi, Kikingi, Yongo, Kinsaku and Mpesi Kikolo-- a State Post.

"November 17th, we set our faces towards Lula Lumene. We stopped at Songi, Ngungu, crossed the stream "Funuka" and met the chief of Kilumbu. The roads were sandy and heavy to walk on, and climbing hilly places made it a trying day with nine hours travel in the hot sun. At last, from the top of a steep sandhill, many hundred feet high, we could see the Congo River. The next day, we climbed the mountain to the Bisi plateau. About midway is a gentle little spring in the surface of the ground. It's water is lovely, cool and clear. On the way to the spring, we passed a small depression in the ground. In the rainy season, water gathers, and from this, the people in the district bring water for their chief to drink at their coronation. On the way to the plateau grows a large quantity of rubber plants.

"Looking across from the hill, we thought there must be only a valley between us and the teacher's house--which could barely be seen in the distance. Down the steep sandhill we started with new courage, but saw, to our sorrow, that what we thought was a valley turned out to be a sea of hills. When reaching the foot of the hill, I almost lost courage. Looking back, I saw a hill of a thousand feet; looking forward--hills upon hills. I sat down by the path and took my pulse, which was 150. The respiration was 50. As I sat there a voice whispered to me, "Why make yourself all this trouble for the sake of preaching the Gospel and winning souls; you might just as well stay at home and take it easy." I knew his voice, and told the Master about it. After resting a little, new courage took the place of discouragement; and forward we went, in one hour going up and down four hills before reaching Kinsau. We came to the river Lula and slept in Kikuti.

November 19th, we passed through Bumbu and Bombo, passing by Mbeko Nseke and saw antilopes and buffaloes. We then came to the State Post. I slept in a tent here and rested the next day. Word was brought to me that the chief of Kivunda and Mbeko wanted to see me. He wished to ask me for an evangelist. This chief once sent me, by one of our

young teachers in another village, a chief's cap decorated with thirteen human ears., which looked more like dry mushrooms growing on trees in woods. This is the message he sent by Mayala: "Mundele (man-in-clothes) do you not know that I am a big chief? Look at this cap, I have several like it. Come to my village and give me a teacher for my people." Here I met this old crippled cannibal chief who had in his life partaken of human flesh, receiving an ear of each victim killed. Thirteen ears--thirteen souls, plus others killed and eaten, who had never heard of the glad Message. And now the chief begs for a Protestant preacher-teacher, so he, as well as his people, rejoiced when I brought to him Matuba. I sent Steven Bangu to place two teachers in Kimpuni and Kikamba villages. We went to Kimpasi (town of trouble) to sleep, where they received us with joy, and offered the gift of friendship.

"November 22, We had to start on our way home because of the difficulty of securing food. We walked eight hours and came to Kikuti, where we slept. On Sunday, after speaking of sin, salvation—our hope of eternal life, after death in heaven—a young man rose up and asked: "May I, too, go there?" What a joy to tell him yes. I would gladly have stayed over Sunday, had it not been for lack of food. The wild pigs had eaten up all the food growing in their gardens. We had to give up our visit to Kimbata, a little north of here, as the carriers had no food, and to walk thirty-two kilometers with an empty stomach is no joke, when they also have fifty pounds to carry on their heads; so we steered our course towards Ngunu, a village on the west side of this uninhabited plain. We had to put the tent right in the road while a heavy rainstorm lasted, and as soon as the worst was over, driven by hunger, through rain and wet grass, we marched the whole day. The trail was so narrow and overgrown that it was difficult to find it. We reached Kilumbu, five o'clock P.M., tired and exhausted. My food I divided among the men, so I walked thirty-two kilometers on a plate of soup.

"November 24th, we went to Goliele, the Chief was friendly, but refused to receive us. Next day, we went to Mpesi, but did not find Mr. Luke at home. Steven Bangu returned from placing the two teachers in the villages. In Kikuti village, the chief asked Bangu for his cap, so he might show

the people that he had received us in his village. I promised Bangu another cap when back at Kifwa. Steven Bangu is going to Kiduti to place Kindudi to teach there.

"November 27th, we left for Kifwa with ten carriers, and met a man whom my wife had sent with bread and letters, saying that Dr Sims was coming to Kifwa. We slept at Kikingi and reached Kifwa November 28th on my birthday. Dr. Sims had just arrived and stayed three days with us, discussing the removal of Kifwa station to a drier place and nearer the railway, either at Madimba or at Sona Bata where Ndia Mosi is teaching at the outpost.

In February 1907, Messrs. Bain, Clark, Macdiarmid and Fred went to Sona Bata to look over the land for our new station, this place is much higher than Kifwa, and not so damp. Mr. Bain went to Sona Bata to meet the State agent and to put corner stones for the Sona Bata Station.

VISITING THE VILLAGES

I usually tried to have one general service in connection with the school session for testing the knowledge of the pupils in Bible memory work, reading and oral arithmetic and a few questions relating to health. In this way I could reveal to the adults of the community the progress or lack of it being made by their children, and the reasons for the work carried on by the school, commending some for excellent attendance and encouraging the lazy to more faithful effort.

Those who carried my loads shared with me the preaching of the Word and participation in all services through which we aimed to preach Christ and raise the tone of spiritual life in the area. Here and there new decisions are made to follow Christ, and on subsequent tours we find that God has brought to flower and harvest the Seed sown in many hearts.

A pastor accompanying me held personal conference with all who were registered followers of Christ seeking to fit themselves for baptism. All who were immediately ready to make a public confession were sent to me for prayer, conference regarding their personal experience leading to final recommendation to the church that they be baptized. How inadequate I feel many times for this phase of the work. They are truly such babes. Some have had very real experience of

conversion, spectacular even, but their knowledge of God's Word is very limited. We hold them to certain standards for conduct, and yet should they peep into American and English churches these Congo converts would find many falling far short of what Paul taught and our Master requires of us. Yes, sowing the Seed may sometimes be tedious, but reaping the harvest may be fraught with grave consequences and we need the prayers of friends in Christ that we may know of His patience and wisdom in dealing with those who make up the jewels of His crown.

MARGUERITE ELDREDGE

THE BRIDE WORE SHOES

Here in Congo it is the custom for the groom to supply his bride's wedding finery. A young man may spend many years accumulating it before he has even chosen his bride so it is not surprising that at times the results are amazing. It does not seem to occur to the groom that a fitting before the wedding might be less embarrassing for the bride.

Sometimes it is interesting to have a church with only half walls on three sides. Last week at Kikongo was such a time, for it permitted the entire congregation to observe the following incident (which only the missionaries seemed to think unusual).

The church was packed and we all awaited the arrival of the bride. At last she appeared, shuffling up the path. Just as I was about to start the first bars of the wedding march, she accosted a young man (who turned out to be a relative of the groom), led him to the shade of a nearby palm tree, and calmly asked him to hand over his socks. They were heavy golf hose of a definitely ancient vintage and as definitely indescribable color.

The bride removed her new shoes (the first she had ever possessed) and slipped her feet into the socks, rolling them over her ankles. Then she relaced the shoes and lo! she could walk without having them fall off. She no longer shuffled as she hurried up the path and took her place behind the church, from whence the wedding procession began.

Let those of you who have thought the African women slow-witted now bow your heads in shame. I wondered at the time if I would have been able to extricate myself so

quickly from a similar embarrassing situation.

As the first bars of the Lohegrin Wedding March pealed from the organ, the bride calmly and slowly marched into the church and the remainder of the ceremony was as beautiful and as dignified as anyone could have wished.

V. L. SMITH

WHERE ARE THE WATCHES ?

Now that folk at home are having lots of trouble buying watches or getting old ones repaired, they will be able to better appreciate some of the difficulties that we missionaries have when we send our watches to America for repairs and wait month after month to get them back.

Two of us put ours in the care of home-going missionaries and it turned out that the one who first received them did not return to America and naturally passed them on to someone who was. Kind hearted persons passed them from hand to hand until they were lost from sight. The search after them has now lasted nearly three years. A reply received in answer to our enquiries, gave us so much enjoyment that it really should be shared by others. Here it is ...and Congo missionaries will surely recognize the author! "Dear Mama Smith:

Your interesting post card came to hand a short time ago. Always glad to hear from Congo friends. As for the whereabouts of your watch, I am unable to say. Mama... and I never knew you had a wrist watch, much less one which you entrusted to our care. I think you must have arrived at that conclusion by a process of elimination, that is, after asking everybody else who might have carried it home for you. I would not have dared to carry it home without letting Mama...(his wife) know about it and neither of us has any record or recollection whatever of ever having received a watch from you and we honestly believe that we left in New York everything which was given to us to leave there.

Could you tell me just when you gave it to me - the year, month, day of month, hour of day, minute, and as near as possible second. Where was I when you gave it, at work, or play, in house, open air, walking, running, sitting? In Leopoldville, Kimpese, Kikongo, on barge, river steamer, canoe, bicycle? Did you give it to me in person or by proxy?

Give exact wording of presentation speech and instructions expressed or implied, what state of mind was I in at the time? Good natured as usual, grouchy as under provocation, temperature subnormal as usual, blood pressure high, usual indigestion, etc, etc.? If you will give me the above information with a lot more, I may know better than I do now that you gave it to your husband or somebody else's husband to give to me and they have not yet done it or that you regretted you did not give it to me instead of to somebody else who forgot about it and failed to deliver. At any rate, I am sorry and hope you may yet find the watch."

And so do I! And so does Agnes Anderson, owner of the other watch!

VIOLA L. SMITH

OPENING OF THE NEW SCHOOL YEAR 1943 44

Shadows appeared on the horizon in September 1943 for it seemed that our school would have to proceed on its own momentum, without a missionary in charge to guide and encourage, however last minute changes came about that dispersed the shadows.

The school opened with renewed interest in an improved program, in the expectation of faith in the divine blessing. To follow more closely the official program a sixth year of primary studies was introduced. The school attendance of 356 is made up of 11 classes including three girls' classes, a preparatory class for boys and the kindergarten.

Worthwhile school work depends largely on the competence of the native teachers, and we are fortunate in having a fine group. They cooperate well and work in consecrated harmony. Their healthy Christian influence is bearing fruit amongst the scholars. Many of these teachers are former scholars who are glad to serve the mission. We hope these may be the forerunners of a new generation better prepared to meet the difficulties of the present time, but also more consecrated in the service of the Master. In spite of difficulties, in spite of lukewarmness and some indifference, the school has made fine progress during the last three months. At the beginning of December came the quarterly exams with the usual enthusiasm mingled with anxiety. As Christmas drew near carol singing and preparation of the pageant

required some time but the regular routine was little disturbed. Christmas came with all its joy, giving and receiving of presents, etc. Sunday the 26th was a big day, the church had been decorated with palmbranches and flowers, a large crowd came with happy spirits and smiling faces. Pastors, teachers, missionaries and laymen gave brief messages interspersed with song periods.

Our church could not have held the very large crowd that gathered in the open air in the afternoon. We could only find seats for a proportion of them outside with every available seat and bench in use. The school children presented "Artaban" enriched with some very fine singing by the junior and other choirs. People overflowed everywhere, some copied Zacheus and climbed the trees near by the better to see what was going on. Around 1500 were present, many of them strangers to our evangelical witness and testimony, curiosity brought many of them but we seek as ever to sow the good seed in season and out of season and we were glad of this another opportunity.

The following day Monday the scholars assembled in the church-school and presents, received thru the white Cross and other sources, were distributed, giving joy to many hearts. Some had a doll, others dresses, pencils, toys or colored crayons.

A week later the New Year's services brought us much joy with ten persons being received into the church by baptism and partaking for the first time of the Lord's supper. As usual baptism took place at 6:30 A.M. in a little stream bordering the town.

We are at present having a holiday from school. Towards the end of January the school will begin with new vigor and a rebirth of hope. We shall forget our shortcomings and our weaknesses in the joy of again serving the boys and the girls of Leopoldville as we seek to lead them to the Light of Life. We are not alone nor left to our own resources, we count on God for grace and strength as we face the future with joy, confidence and thankfulness. We thank you one and all who, tho far away, remember us by your prayers, your gifts and your brotherly sympathy which shall redound to the glory of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

SEBASTIAN BAIOTTI Leopoldville



STATION NEWS



VANGA NEWS ITEMS

As I write I hear the sound of Christmas carols in the church reminding me that the birthday of the King is drawing near. Rehearsals are underway for two Christmas pageants.

The large group of school children bring a continual challenge to us all. How we do seek wisdom from above that we may lead these precious young lives into a fuller dedication to Christ. Almost 400 young people are in training in our station schools and many hundred more are in our village schools. The 125 girls in the girls' lupangu make plenty of noise and activity.

Dr. Freas is out for three days making his annual examination for sleeping sickness in the villages allotted to us by the government. Doctor's fame has travelled and he has patients from many distant places, Kikwit, Banningville and distant posts on the Kasai. Miss Youngsman returned with him from his last visit to Kikongo and we enjoyed having her with us for a few weeks.

The work in the district keeps Mr. Robbins busy. He has been out itinerating since October with three brief visits to the station. He brings news of growth in the Lord's work in spite of many difficulties.

Priscilla and Lily are happy in their school work and anticipating Christmas. They are to be angels in the Christmas pageant. We have a fine group of station children and Sunday mornings children's service is an interesting place. We are using the felt-o-graph pictures. If it is true that children remember 50 % of what they see and only 10 % of what they hear then it is worthwhile taking time to make a fel-o-graph. It can be done by taking any board 27X38 inches and covering it with a piece of black outing flannel, $\frac{1}{2}$ yd., blue flannel serves for the sky and $\frac{1}{2}$ yd of gray for the hills. I have cut out pictures of animals, birds, trees etc. from magazines. and palm trees on the cover of Congo Mis-

sion News. I have a variety of Bible pictures illustrating the different Bible stories.

Sunday afternoons, Mrs. Freas is conducting a class for married folks on Christian home life. We hope that this course of talks will result in happier, Christian homes and we feel sure that it will.

Mrs. Robbins has a full program with teaching, supervising the printing, and taking care of the evangelistic work at the home base while her husband carries on in the district.

Day by day we find unlimited opportunities for service and we pray that we may be faithful in putting first things first.

RUTH DICKEY

NOTES

We are more than happy to welcome Elmer and Margaret Hall, Dr. Osterholm, and Eva Shepard back to Congo. We wish them all a happy term of service.-Ed.

CONGO MISSION DIRECTORY

Listed in order of arrival on field or at station — present term

BANZA MANTEKE

Miss Lena Youngsman
Rev. M.S. Engwall
Miss Mary Bonar

KIKONGO

Rev. and Mrs. C.E. Smith
Miss Agnes Anderson
Rev. and Mrs. B.W. Armstrong

MOANZA

Rev. and Mrs. L.A. Brown
Miss Alice Jorgenson
Miss Eva Shepard

VANGA

Rev. and Mrs. W.F. Robbins
Miss Ruth Dickey
Dr. and Mrs. H.M. Freas

TONDO

Rev. and Mrs. H.D. Brown
Dr. and Mrs. R. Jones

(B.M.S.)

Miss M.K.M. Chaplin (B.M.S.)
Miss Marguerite Eldredge

KIMPESE

Miss Grace Cooper
Rev. and Mrs. E.G. Hall

SONA BATA

Dr. and Mrs. G.W. Tuttle
Miss Emily Satterberg
Miss Vendla Anderson
Rev. and Mrs. R. Metzger
Dr. A.C. Osterholm

LEOPOLDVILLE

Rev. and Mrs. S. Baiotti (U.T.M.)
Mr. and Mrs. H.J. Watkins

ON FURLOUGH OR EN ROUTE

Mrs. M.S. Engwall
Rev. and Mrs. E. Atkins
Rev. and Mrs. J.E. Geil
Miss Esther Ehnborn

Miss Mildred Tice
Mrs. A.C. Osterholm
Rev. and Mrs. H. Erickson
Dr. and Mrs. A.J.B. Russell
(B.M.S.)